



USAID
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Office of Transition Initiatives

COMMUNITY COHESION INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT OCTOBER 2013 - SEPTEMBER 2014



OTI Mission Statement

To support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and Creative Associates International, Inc. (Creative) launched the Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) in March 2012, with Task Order conclusion scheduled February 28, 2015.

A mid 2013 program review by Creative-CCI and OTI resulted in management and staff downsizing and realignment of strategic objectives. The purpose was to address activity clearances and implementation underperformance, a rapidly changing security environment and political transition implications due to the 2014 Presidential elections.

Future strategy would be driven by local level infrastructure and community capacity building, peaceful elections advocacy, inclusive dispute resolution, and programing that seeks to counter violent threats to peaceful transition and increase resilience in areas vulnerable to insurgent exploitation.

PROGRAM AREAS

In the period October 2013 – September 2014, Creative-CCI maintained its focus across 19 strategically important districts within Kandahar and Helmand provinces in the South/Southwest, and Ghazni, Khost and Kunar in the East, with programming concluding in Zabul province at the end of March 2014. The Program Development Unit (PDU) additionally involves Kabul based and nationally targeted media activities. The Peaceful Elections Advocacy Program and mobilization of an international elections audit observation team supporting the Independent Election Commission (IEC) ballot audit during Q4, resulted in the program extending its range of objectives on behalf of USAID/OTI.

Creative-CCI's small grants approach remained centered on community and citizen engagement, strengthening ties between and among local actors, customary governance structures, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). The overarching goal is to increase resilience in areas of operation, empower communities to withstand and resist adverse influences, come together to support mutual goals and problem solving, hold improved perceptions of good governance and be able to safely and effectively maintain linkages and communicate with government authorities.

To direct and improve programming, Creative-CCI relies on a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. In addition to a rolling assessment and work plan process, M&E gathers information from multiple levels of the program to include atmospherics and data from third parties (spanning activity outputs to overall stability of an area), to assessing programming success and providing information necessary to improve activities and inform district appraisals.

COUNTRY SITUATION

Q4 again experienced escalating insurgent activity in the Eastern, South Eastern and Southern regions, as reported through Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) channels. While this aligns with the cyclical fighting season, it now appears to be more non-permissive than permissive in locations where Creative-CCI operates. Kunar and Nuristan in the East both experienced ongoing cross border conflict, with regular shelling from Pakistan-based insurgents, while Khost registered a level of insurgent movements that statistically ranks it among one of the most unstable provinces in the country. At the end of September, Creative-CCI security reports point to the program's Helmand districts being dominated by insurgent control, following weeks of fighting. This led to thousands of families being displaced and some Creative-CCI project sites in the Sangin Valley rendered periodically inaccessible. Fortunately, there have been no staff casualties, with the fragile security situation being closely monitored by Creative-CCI management.

Security surrounding the presidential election runoff and subsequent vote audit was extremely high, with tensions and arguments between rival parties culminating in an outcome achieved under strained circumstances. The International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and a combined effort of all ANSF elements oversaw the audit security effort, which was supervised by the United Nations (UN). The program profile was significantly increased due to Creative-CCI's mobilization of 40 of the 200 international election observers, which involved frequent daily personnel movements. This was secured through Edinburgh International (Gabriel Team) in coordination with the security element from Creative-CCI.

The comparison below details recorded incidents in Q3 (Apr-May-Jun) against Q4 (July-Aug-Sep) 2014, in the areas where Creative-CCI operates. Incidents are not project specific, with the data collected from National Police Control Centre daily reports (implying figures may be conservative).

Province	Armed Clashes Q3	Armed Clashes Q4	IED Q3	IED* Q4	BBIED VBIED Q3	BBIED# VBIED Q4	Stand off Q3	Stand off Q4	Others Q3	Others Q4
Kabul	8	14	41	50	3	10	14	17	52	30
Kandahar	55	46	68	49	2	7	19	13	47	37
Kunar	44	24	21	16	1	0	131	133	34	35
Ghazni	83	83	30	28	1	6	44	36	34	30
Helmand	131	146	62	88	2	3	16	20	41	32
Khost	8	16	21	17	1	0	12	17	10	16
Grand Total	329	329	243	248	10	26	236	236	218	180

*Improvised Explosive Device (IED)

Bicycle/Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device BBIED/VBIED

The Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) administrative changeover to Ministry of Interior (MOI) was completed in July, with program related contracts and staff coordination affirmed and in place. Expatriate staff movement remains limited and unchanged from last quarter. The current security posture is unlikely to decrease during the remainder of the program, and interfacing with other organizations remains restricted to implementing partners applying equivalent security standards as the Creative-CCI program.

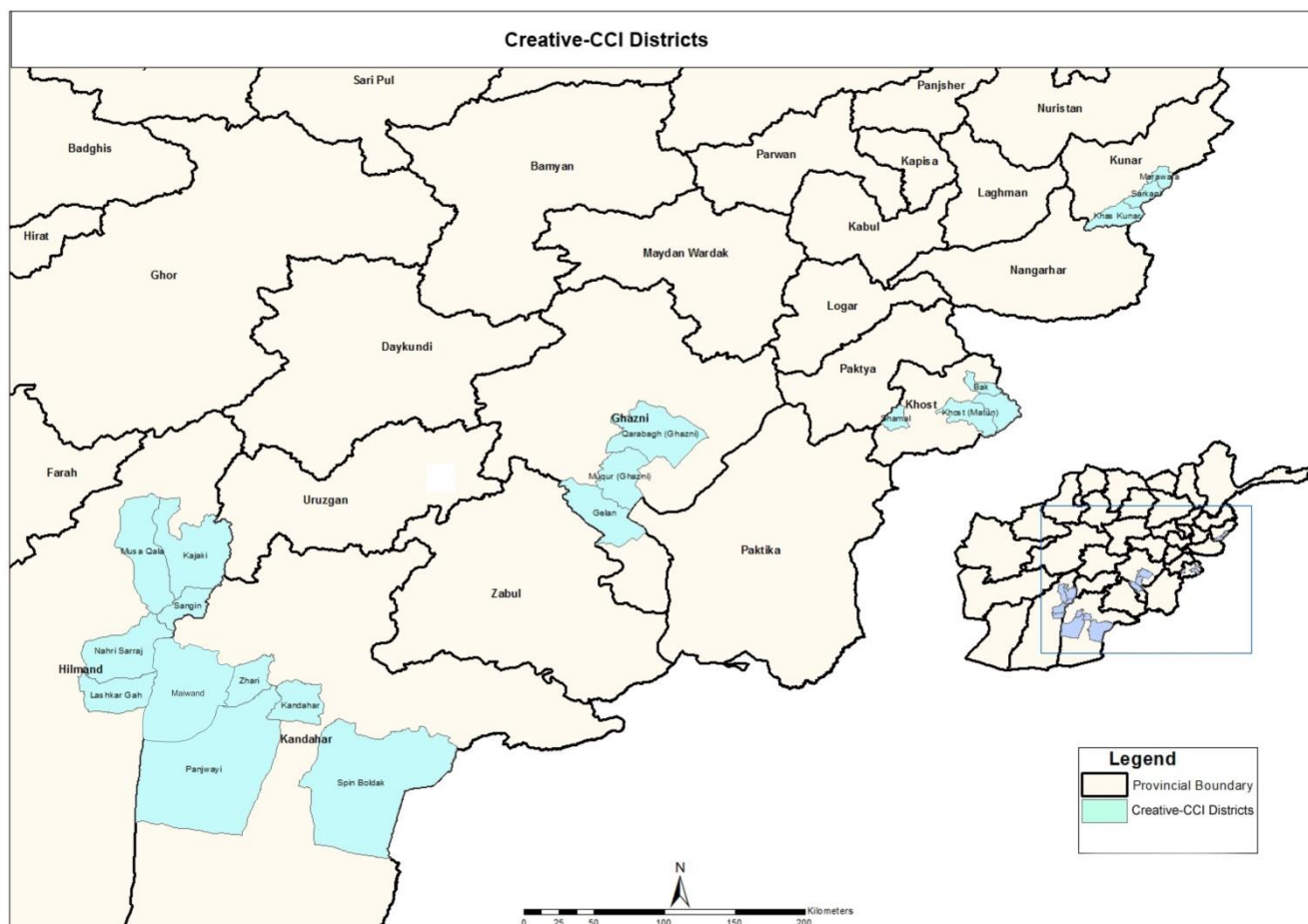
Future projections for the whole-of-program indicate no reduction in risk outlook, with regional security issues ongoing and Kabul remaining on high alert. The final drawdown of ISAF forces is due by the end of 2014, and already Anti-Government Elements (AGEs) are reoccupying areas being handed over to ANSF forces, resulting in insurgent activity spikes due to increased freedom to maneuver. It is anticipated that coming months will continue to be challenging, as the program moves fully into closedown phase.

Political Landscape

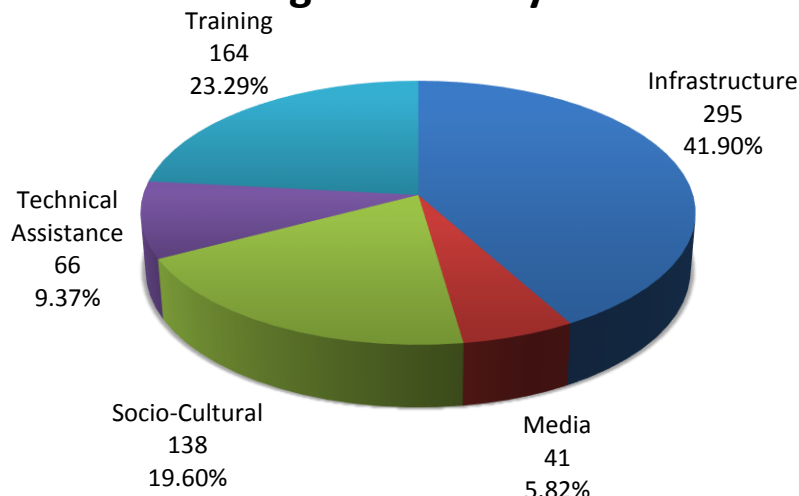
"The Independent Election Commission declares Ashraf Ghani as the president," commission chief Ahmad Yousaf Nuristani announced on September 14, 2014, following a comprehensive 100% audit of 8 million ballots and without stating the number of votes each candidate had won. On Monday September 22, the president-elect was inaugurated in Afghanistan's first ever democratic transition of power, ushering in a unique administrative sharing agreement brokered by US Secretary of State John Kerry. The new unity government sees President Ghani's rival, Abdullah Abdullah, appointed GIROA Chief Executive, a position viewed by political observers as a move to avert potential violence by Abdullah's supporters.

The inauguration followed a contentious five month process after the initial April 05 elections, which also voted in the 458-member Provincial Council. The presidential runoff election was held on June 14, resulting in ongoing accusations of fraud and vote rigging from both sides, contributing to worsening insecurity across the country and further damaging a fragile economy already dependent on foreign aid. On September 30, President Ghani signed the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), linked to the continuation of aid needed to pay Afghan civil servants and soldiers, also allowing a small international military contingent to remain beyond 2014 to advise and assist Afghan security forces.

During this period, Creative-CCI's Peaceful Election Advocacy Advisors provided first-hand knowledge and assessment of local and national political dynamics, travelling to all five provinces supervising pre- and post-elections focus group activities and community dialogue training. In collaboration with PDU and the Media and Strategic Communications Unit, a comprehensive media outreach messaging strategy was developed and disseminated by the Kabul office and through local NGO partners.



OTI-Afghanistan-by Sector



Q4 GRANTS SUMMARY BY SECTOR

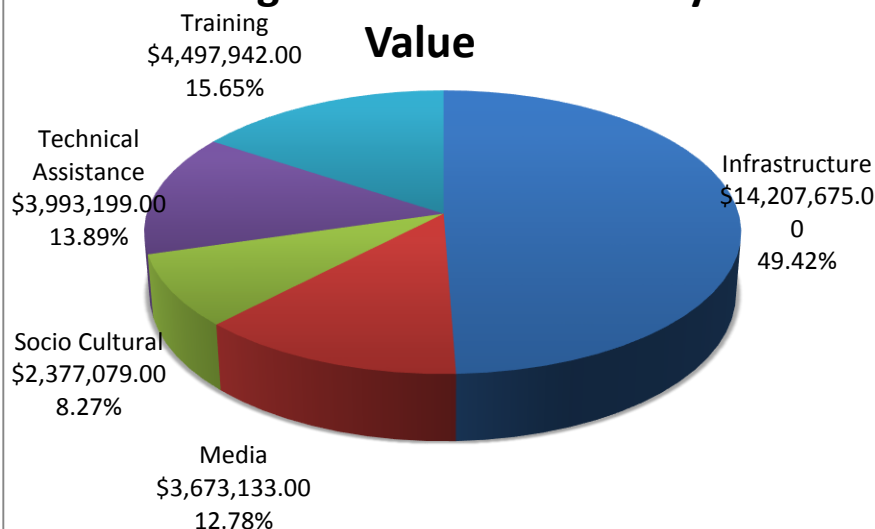
Sector weighting was driven by cohesion jirgas and direct community consultation outcomes, which determined activities that aligned with the program's strategic objectives.

Since March 2012, OTI, through its implementing partner Creative-CCI, has cleared, completed, or closed 704 small grants. The breakdown by sector is as follows: Infrastructure 295 grants (41.90%), Media 41 grants (5.82%), Socio Cultural 138 grants (19.60%), Technical Assistance 66 grants (9.37%) and Training 164 grants (23.29%).

Between July and September 2014, Creative-CCI has cleared, completed, or closed 47 small grants:

- Infrastructure: 0 grants
- Media: 3 grants
- Socio-Cultural: 2 grants
- Technical Assistance: 42 grants
- Training: 0 grants

OTI-Afghanistan-Activities by Value



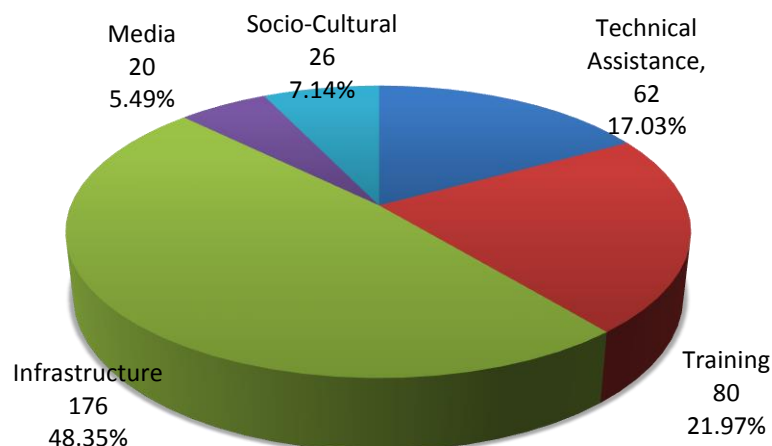
Q4 GRANTS SUMMARY BY VALUE

Since March 2012, OTI, through its implementing partner, Creative-CCI has cleared, completed, or closed 704 small grants; totaling \$28,749,028. The breakdown by value is as follows: Infrastructure \$14,207,675 (49.42%), Media \$3,673,133 (12.78%), Socio Cultural \$2,377,079 (8.27%), Technical Assistance \$3,993,199 (13.89%) and Training \$4,497,942 (15.65%).

Between July and September 2014, Creative-CCI:

- Cleared: 47 Grants worth \$3,044,579
- Disbursed (Quarterly): \$6,356,343.26
- Disbursed (Life of Program): \$19,415,344.55
- Completed: 61 activities
- Closed: 97 Activities

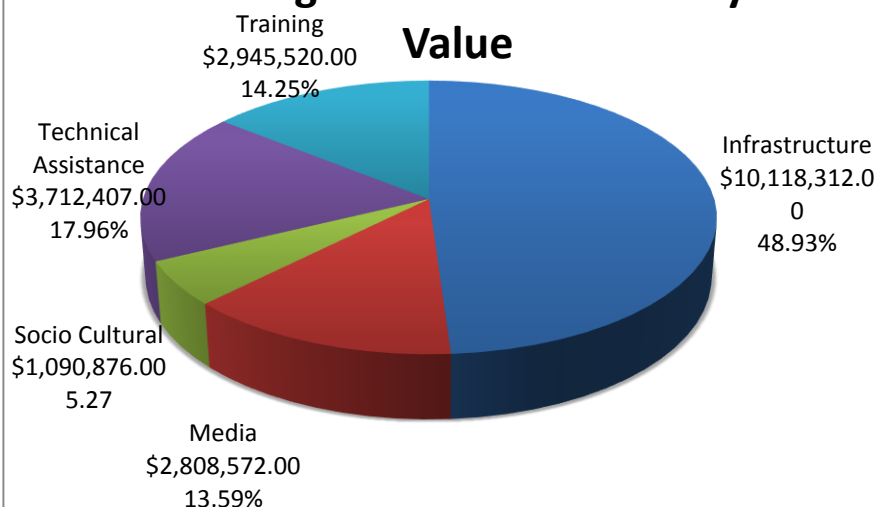
OTI-Afghanistan by Sector



ANNUAL GRANTS SUMMARY BY SECTOR

Between October 2013 and September 2014, OTI, through its implementing partner, Creative-CCI has cleared, completed, or closed 364 small grants. The breakdown by sector is as follows: Infrastructure 176 grants (48.35%), Media 20 grants (5.49%), Socio Cultural 26 grants (7.14%), Technical Assistance 62 grants (17.03%) and Training 80 grants (21.97%).

OTI-Afghanistan-Activities by Value



ANNUAL GRANTS SUMMARY BY VALUE

Between October 2013 and September 2014, OTI, through its implementing partner, Creative-CCI has cleared, completed, or closed 364 small grants; totaling \$20,675,687. The breakdown by value is as follows: Infrastructure \$10,118,312 (48.93%), Media \$2,808,572 (13.59%), Socio Cultural \$1,090,876 (5.27%), Technical Assistance \$3,712,407 (17.96%) and Training \$2,945,520 (14.25%).

TYPE	NUMBER	EST. COST	AMT.DISBURSED	COMPLETED	CLOSED
In-Kind Grants	278	\$13,792,165.24	\$8,551,114.23	158	318
Cash Grants	20	\$1,907,196.26	\$1,347,467.62	4	12
DDGS	18	\$2,078,312.83	\$1,164,919.16	13	7
STTA	48	\$2,898,013.06	\$542,318.90	43	3
TOTAL:	364	\$20,675,687.39	\$11,605,819.91	218	340

PROGRAM EVALUATION

In its early stages, the program primarily focused on small-scale infrastructure activities, mainly involving the rehabilitation of street networks, karizes, and schools (referred to as *hard* projects), along with vocational training, such as carpentry and tailoring (referred to as *soft* projects). From late 2013, Creative-CCI also selected larger-sized activities from lists generated by cohesion jirgas and diversified the nature of hard projects, by including activities like solar lighting projects and irrigation water reservoirs.

Between October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014:

- East (Kunar, Khost, and Ghazni) implemented 121 projects valued at \$7,588,630;
- South (Helmand, Kandahar, and Zabul until March 2014) implemented 162 projects, valued at \$6,904,113; and
- PDU implemented 80 projects, valued at \$6,329,830.

East

The current political situation and sudden influx by AGEs identified by authorities as many coming from Pakistan has considerably increased the number of security related incidents in all border districts of Khost province. The uncontrolled presence of these elements has limited freedom of movement in and out of districts where Creative-CCI operates, affecting program implementation. In Bak district, community members have been warned not to participate at events organized by GIRoA, while in neighboring Tere Zayi, a respected tribal elder who played a leading role in bringing community groups together and linking with GIRoA representatives who was also a firm supporter of Creative-CCI district programing, was killed by an insurgent in front of his home.

Throughout what has been an intensely difficult fourth quarter, Khost, Kunar and Ghazni provincial teams, with Kabul's remote management, have achieved a range of remarkable and positive outcomes driven by community spirit that mirrors Creative-CCI fundamentals. The Ganjgal valley road rehabilitation in Kunar (SAR0026) work was forced to halt on many occasions due to multiple site attacks that included a roadside bomb explosion, causing a project laborer to lose his leg. After completing the majority of the roadwork, the project Shura was unwilling to restart the project due to intensified AGE attacks and personal threats. However, with general public and Afghan Local Police (ALP) support, and in collaboration with the District Governor's Office (DGO), another influential community elder stepped forward to lead the 900 meter road project to its successful completion in August.

The final 39 projects cleared during the Q3 period in line with the OTI-CCI "*Last Kick Strategy*" and designed to reflect Creative-CCI core strategy to strengthen community capacities and promote peaceful transition, were evenly distributed across the three East provinces and are on schedule for completion by November 30.

South

While progressing, program operations in Helmand and Kandahar have also been significantly affected by increased insurgent activity. The elections period in Kandahar City presented many challenges for provincial teams, with increased security measures prompting an office relocation and ad hoc access availability to inspect district activities. In July, former President Karzai's half-brother, a leading elections campaign manager for Ashraf Ghani, was assassinated in a Kandahar City suicide attack. In Helmand's Sangin district, insurgents warned residents not to leave their homes between April 1 –10, during the first voting period.

Despite deteriorating security in several districts, provincial teams have witnessed remarkable growth in the resilience of communities where CCI is working. Residents are beginning to stand up to the Taliban in order to achieve their goals. For example, during the growing season in the spring and summer months, the need for improved irrigation becomes paramount as farmers are generating the majority of their annual income. In Zhari District, the Taliban threatened to disrupt culvert rehabilitation activity ZHA0035 with explosives during construction. After meetings and talks held between local leaders and the Taliban, the work was finally allowed to proceed. Now, farmers who benefit from the improved irrigation system are able to earn a decent income without growing poppy or joining the AGEs. The community also has an instilled sense of pride and residents are more confident in the abilities of the local government to service community needs.

During Q3 and start of Q4, District teams worked closely with local leaders to prioritize 70 final key activities in line with the OTI-CCI "*Last Kick Strategy*", designed to reflect Creative-CCI core strategy and to strengthen community capacities and promote peaceful transition. These projects are scheduled for completion by November 30.

Program Development Unit

This reporting period was highlighted by the July 21 announcement of the IEC-led 100% ballot audit of the presidential runoff results. In response and in consultation with OTI, PDU led an immediate deployment of 40 international election audit observers and implemented extensions to ongoing peaceful election messaging activities. Creative-CCI worked with OTI field teams to advance selection and mobilization processes, particularly in observer recruitment, expediting travel authorizations, Green Light approvals, and individual vetting determinations. The delay in announcing a new president impacted implementation of PDU's non-election programming, most notably because of rising insecurity across the country. Regardless, the dispute resolution and urban transition initiatives served as a successful highlight among PDU activities.

Q4 saw a second implementation quarter of the dispute resolution activities, now spanning 24 districts across six provinces. PDU is working with five civil society partners, supporting a series of pilot, traditional dispute resolution activities that focus on intractable and/or recurrent disputes, while building stronger linkages with provincial level dispute resolution mechanisms. Targeting dispute resolution bodies from the village to provincial level, these proof-of-concept activities share a common theme of providing tangible and practical support that focuses on stimulating exchange between different actors, establishing formal-informal referral systems, and working through existing cases in areas of implementation. This marks the first time Creative-CCI has engaged in dispute resolution activities with a holistic and strategic approach. PDU set out to build linkages across formal and informal structures, bringing together district/local government and community jirgas in joint trainings, then applied on practical cases at hand (e.g. water access or land disputes). CCI has already observed tangible activity outcomes. The Afghan Paramount Welfare and Development Organization (APWDO), working in three districts in Kunar, has supported the local jirga to resolve three pending cases including a property dispute in Marawara, water distribution dispute in Sarkani and land dispute in Khas Kunar. Importantly, resolution of these cases was a collaborative effort between community elders, the Directorate of Justice and religious scholars, with positive outcomes being registered with the Directorate of Justice. Approaching dispute resolution from an alternate angle, the Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organization (NECDO) has established three provincial level working groups in Kabul, Kunar and Kandahar, comprising influential imams, social workers and provincial government representatives.

Media Outreach

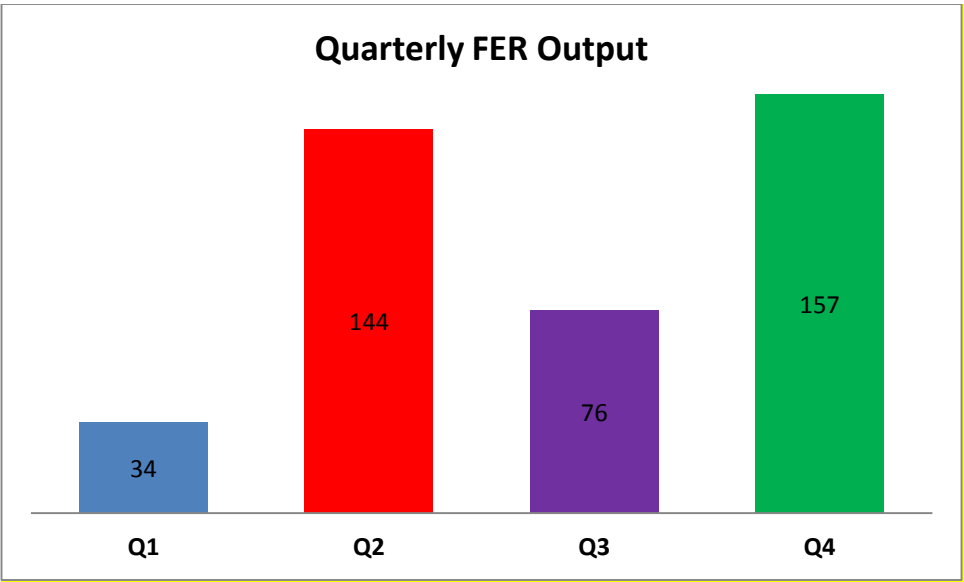
The PDU continues to utilize media to promote dialogue and understanding between communities and GIRoA, through a diverse range of activities. These include working with Kandahar youth to establish an integrated online and mobile phone platform to collect, curate and disseminate stories about community efforts that promote peace, and a women's radio talk show in Kandahar encouraging dialogue on the rights and roles of women in society.

Underscoring Creative-CCI's work to date is the production and broadcast of a television and radio Pashto drama series called *Innocent Heart*. On-air from October, the strategy behind the concept is to employ a compelling docu-drama format leveraging Creative-CCI's programmatic core themes that promote models of positive behavioral change. In 2014 the PDU also commissioned two "reality style" series. An 11-part competitive weekly television project titled *Dream and Achieve* aims to bring together entrepreneurial individuals, by identifying and rewarding successful small civic-run projects that can be role models for others to emulate. The other is the 12-part *Fix-It* radio series, which was broadcast nationally during Q3 and Q4 in Dari and Pashto across 64 independent radio stations. Acting as a bridge between civil society and government, *Fix-It's* public affairs format demonstrates how local media plays a constructive role in assisting communities to hold government accountable, and can serve as a peaceful catalyst for change. The primary purpose of *Fix-It* is to advocate that communities should exercise their rights, and that various levels of government have a responsibility to respond to those calls.

Peaceful Elections Advocacy media support spanned March – October, 2014, and is referenced later in this document.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E team in Q1 delivered 34 FERs to OTI for approval. After the strategic objectives realignment directive was implemented in Q4, 2013, multiple grants were fast-tracked for clearance and implementation, with one challenge being insufficient timely data supplied to the M&E unit to appropriately verify and complete corresponding Final Evaluation Reports (FERs)



Q2 saw the appointment of a new M&E manager that coincided with an increased monitoring and evaluation flow. The M&E team also cleared the FER backlog during this period, delivering 144 FERs to OTI for approval in Q2 and 76 FERs during Q3. The final quarter was more productive with 109 FERs delivered to OTI, and a further 48 FERs pending. There’s also been substantial improvement in work quality, with the key indicator being a marked reduction in the requirement to reopen closed activities for corrective action.

On average, provincial and district M&E team members conduct weekly visits to every site activity across the program (subject to security clearance). Activity progress report findings and lessons learned are updated into the OTI database each week.

Procurement

During the reporting period, there has been a significant ramp-up in the number of procurements conducted under in-kind grants for both direct and indirect implemented activities, as well as direct distribution of goods and services (DDGS). A total of 940 contracts were signed for program procurements across all regions (East, South and National), representing a total value of \$11,348,259.17. These procurements encompassed a wide range of goods and services for both soft and hard activities such as: trainings on emergency response, animal husbandry, conflict resolution, carpentry, tailoring and other topical areas; small scale infrastructure projects – including construction and/or rehabilitation of parks, schools, roads, culverts etc.; elections action research; and a comprehensive media campaign to encourage a peaceful response to the 2014 Presidential Elections.

Additionally, 179 contracts were signed for operations procurements, valued at \$652,324.30. These included items such as fuel, internet services, vehicle rental, office supplies, accommodations, and security upgrades, to ensure the smooth operation of all of Creative-CCI’s offices.

During the October 2013 – September 2014 period, there has also been corresponding improvements to systems and processes in response to increased programming. More robust systems were implemented from October 2013 to accommodate a larger number of more complex procurements. The development of these systems was accompanied by capacity building of staff and the development of new procurement checklists, ensuring each procurement file was fully compliant with Creative-CCI policies and procedures and USAID regulations. These updated systems and processes were formally outlined in the new Creative-CCI Procurement Manual finalized in January 2014, and utilized in training sessions for all procurement and the majority of non-procurement staff.

The October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014 overview of procurement successes follows:

****Please note that this table does not include micro-procurements.***

	Q1 Oct 1 – Dec 31	Q2 Jan 1 – Mar 31	Q3 Apr 1 – June 30	Q4 Jul 1 – Sept 30	Annual Total
Number of POs executed for direct implementation projects (East and South)	132	237	230	188	787
Value (in USD) of POs executed for direct implementation projects (East and South)	\$598,262.32	\$1,010,179.24	\$1,100,698.97	\$ 1,172,331.28	\$3,881,471.81
Number of POAs executed for indirect implementation project/service providers (East and South)	13	34	35	11	93
Value (in USD) of POAs executed for indirect implementation projects (East and South)	\$866,830.95	\$2,095,503.80	\$ 1,671,903.11	\$ 782,963.71	\$5,417,201.57
Number of contracts (i.e. POs and POAs) executed for national activities	1	9	34	16	60
Value (in USD) of contracts (i.e. POs and POAs) executed for national activities	\$75,000	\$541,600.60	\$462,113.63	\$970,871.56	\$2,049,585.79
Value (in USD) of all contracts executed during LOP for East, South and National program activities	\$ 11,348,259.17				
Number of ops contracts (i.e. POs, POAs and BPAs) executed	44	53	63	20	179
Value of ops contracts executed	\$213,813.63	\$152,302.70	\$241,137.42	\$45,070.55	\$652,324.30

Number of VSU vetting requests submitted (ops and program)	45	28	45	69	187
Value (in USD) of VSU requests submitted	\$1,936,789.58	1,569,223.84	\$ 2,254,235.17	\$ 3,051,733.73	\$8,811,982.32
Number of VSU approvals received (ops and program)	21	38	44	81	184
Value (in USD) of VSU requests received	\$1,014,897.48	\$1,754,144.48	\$ 2,282,511.81	\$ 3,649,136.57	\$8,700,690.34
Number of staff trained	8	17	45	0	70

Program Closedown

CCI's closedown plan was submitted to OTI approved on September 8, 2014. The Closedown Manager mobilized to the field during Q4, with Creative-CCI commencing full phase 3 closedown activities in accordance with the February 28, 2015 Task Order program conclusion.

To support implementation targets and ensure continued community support, Creative-CCI plans progressive office closures and staff drawdowns that facilitate overall program conclusion and administrative closedown requirements. District offices in Moqur and Nahri Sarraj will close by October 9, Ghazni, Helmand, Khost and Kunar provincial offices by November 30, while Kandahar will remain open through December 31.

Between November 30 and December 31, the Kandahar regional office will be utilized as an operations hub for final document collection, file reviews, packing, and temporary storage of non-expendable property items that are unable to be disposed from the Helmand office. As activities conclude and final documentation collection continues prior to full office closure, remaining South program teams will relocate to the Kandahar office, and East teams to the Kabul office. All provincial managers will ultimately move to Kabul from December 01 – January 31, 2015, to assist with final closedown activities. A reduced staff, consisting of regional managers and operations staff from both the South and East will remain in Kabul to assist with closedown, through to the end of the in-country presence. The Kabul office lease will be terminated on February 28, 2015.

This timeline for office closures allows for the Creative-CCI team to ensure effective implementation and closedown of activities, while final program documentation is collected, inventoried and shipped, before security structures are dismantled and the program ends.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Peaceful Elections Advocacy Program

At Q4 commencement, PDU was preparing to wind down and close out its Peaceful Elections Advocacy portfolio, however the protracted outcome and subsequent ballot audit announcement necessitated a strategy review. At the start of July, prior to the audit announcement, OTI facilitated a meeting that included Creative-CCI and USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance (ODG), to discuss expanding messaging activities that address increased tensions over perceived IEC vote counting delays and lack of public update communications. Drawing upon Creative-CCI's earlier successful messaging campaigns that supported community-driven efforts to prevent or mitigate electoral conflict or violence, OTI requested the program extend coverage to encompass a national footprint. One week after meeting with OTI and ODG, the IEC announced a 100% ballot audit, which resulted in early euphoria among the electorate, replaced with outspoken distrust and rising disenfranchisement of the polling process. Utilizing information gathered to date after engaging local partners and consulting with communities, PDU conceptualized, produced and disseminated a schedule of radio and television messages in different languages and provincial accents, designed to encourage the population to remain patient during the audit, and highlighting the benefits a peaceful outcome can bring to Afghanistan.

The overall Peaceful Elections Advocacy strategy spanned Q2, Q3 and Q4, with predominantly radio and print utilized during the April 5, 2014 Presidential and Provincial Council elections. Television was combined with radio messages to encourage the electorate to once more turn out for the runoff vote, with Public Service Announcements (PSAs) like this <http://youtu.be/g9o-Jopfn5g> and this <http://youtu.be/2ZNyvn0ah4Q> commissioned by Creative-CCI. As it became clearer a final elections result would be some time away (and the audit had been announced), in August a series of PSAs were produced further supporting the elections process and underscoring how improved health, education, infrastructure and job creation can occur under a peaceful and untied Afghanistan. Titled "The Future of Afghanistan is in Our Hands" one can be viewed here <http://youtu.be/bljoDtGRCv8> and another here <http://youtu.be/lGjgcAC8Sjw>

As at 30 September, total radio and TV broadcasts were: 18,893 radio and 1,045 television PSAs.

Elections Audit Observation Team

Supporting the Independent Elections Commission 100% audit of all votes cast in Afghanistan's Presidential Election runoff, OTI requested Creative-CCI to mobilize a team of expert elections observers to join the international effort being supervised by the United Nations.

Creative-CCI managed the deployment and coordination of 40 professional observers and experienced practitioners from 22 countries and representing 20% of the entire observer presence, providing 7-day support over a 6-week period, counting 8 million ballots.



Television and Radio Drama

Innocent Heart is a 6-part weekly Pashto drama series written and produced in-house by Creative-CCI, with crew production and post-production outsourced in partnership with a local television company. Similarly, the concept has been adapted to broadcast nationally through a 10-part radio series.

Commencing on-air in October, the series centers on Kabir, a 12-year-old boy naively manipulated by insurgents into planting an IED that kills three people, including his best friend and his brother-in-law. While the attack itself is visually and emotionally confronting, episodes leading to the tragic event portray a cast of fundamentally good, although sometimes deeply flawed individuals, striving for a better life. Drawn from different ages, genders,



educational backgrounds and societal roles, they are all individually and devastatingly affected by the explosion, only heightening the senselessness of Kabir's actions and the unforeseen sequential chain of events that follows.

Set within a compelling storyline developed by a team of experienced Afghan drama writers and producers, similar to comparative concepts around the world, *Innocent Heart's* veracious messaging offers pathways where viewers can recognize how communities come together to foster a better future for themselves and their families. *Innocent Heart* represents a better future for Afghanistan, with innovative scripts showing how community led advocacy for local and broader governance organizations, recognition that democratic rule of law and improved cohesive structures can effectively resist insurgent activity, promote peace and stability and lead to better opportunities.

Set in the lead up to fictitious Presidential and Provincial Council Elections, storylines focus on the importance of a peaceful electoral process (parliamentary elections are in 2015), promoting the rights and roles of women within society, fostering positive self-images for young Afghans, and strengthening linkages between the community and GIRoA. The series discreetly references Creative-CCI project outcomes, like road rehabilitation, tailoring courses for women and basketball training camps for girls, and how these contribute to improved community resilience.

Retaining Wall Reassures Zalakhan Communities

Zalakhan Village residents in Kandahar's Panjwayi District regularly battled extreme flooding as seasonal rains threatened lives and eroded valuable farming land. Panjwayi DGO was awarded to lead construction of a 158m retaining wall, providing flood mitigation and improved irrigation solutions through better water management for local farmers. Its completion increased community confidence from a personal safety perspective, and strengthened linkages between Zalakhan communities and local GIRoA representatives. (KANDAHAR: PAN0033)



Before and after view of the new retaining wall in Panjwayi District, which now provides water security for the community.

Carpentry Training Boosts Employment Prospects

Of the many vocational training courses Creative-CCI has implemented, carpentry is viewed as a particularly valuable skill to generate income. In this instance, the District Youth Association was funded to conduct a carpentry course for 50 young men from villages in Ghazni's remote Qarabagh District, which has high unemployment. In addition to acquiring practical skills to improve job prospects, the course was an opportunity for government to demonstrate it is working to support youth and build self-esteem. Unemployment is a major element behind youth succumbing to AGE influences, as it is often seen as a last resort to earn income to support their families. (GHAZNI: QBG0022)



Training offers new skills and helps build youth self esteem.

New Road Will Save Lives

Bak District community elders had repeatedly appealed to GIRoA officials for assistance to improve the poor condition of a busy roadway connecting Bak District Center to nearby villages and Khost City. Providing support to the BAK DGO, the program granted a 24-week project to repair 616 meters of roadway, installing culverts and shoulders to upgrade hazardous conditions. Provincial road rehabilitation involves concrete surfacing to impede AGEs burying IEDs, which had caused many injuries in this area. Completion of the access road promotes GIRoA legitimacy and responds to Bak District calls for increased interaction with local government to meet regarding the ongoing security situation, and rule of law matters like dispute resolution determinations. (KHOST: BAK0018)



Final preparations before a concrete surface is applied, reducing likelihood of IEDs being planted.

Farmers Update Animal Husbandry Practices

To improve animal husbandry capacity among livestock raising communities in Sarkani District, Creative-CCI partnered with the Sarkani Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), to successfully complete four weeks of animal husbandry training. Vital to the livelihoods of rural communities in this insecure Kunar border district, the course provided best practice training to 100 farmers. Veterinarians demonstrated how improved animal rearing methods can build farm yields, increase income and offer better food security. Educational trainings like this advocate the legitimacy of the district government and motivate opportunities for licit employment and income generation. (KUNAR: SAR0032)



Local farmers attending an animal husbandry demonstration, conducted by the DAIL instructor.

Park Rehabilitation Benefits Whole Community

The fast growing capital of Ghazni offers few recreational options where residents can relax and enjoy the outdoors. An announcement by the Mayor's Office that Ghazni Municipality would refurbish the large but rundown Ghazni City Park was welcomed by the community, who utilize it regularly to enjoy leisure time. The program-funded upgrade included installing a solar lighting system, new generator room, toilets, swimming pool repairs and garden additions. A separate children's area surrounding wall also serves as a culturally appropriate space where women can meet. A primary goal of the park rehabilitation is to boost the attraction of this amenity as an integral component of the city's social fabric. The park will continue to draw people together in a communal sense, supporting the values of co-existence and community identity. (GHAZNI: GHZ0002)



Laborers laying concrete pathways in the city park. A Solar lighting system was also installed.

Renewal of 50 Year Old Sarkani Health Clinic

In Sarkani District there is increasing demand for better health facilities, which is why the program responded to community calls and worked closely with GIRoA officials to rehabilitate the 50 year old Sarkani Clinic. This activity involved renovating 20 patient consulting rooms, adding a 54 square meter external deck with seating, a 200 meter boundary wall and new entry gates. As the nearest medical facility is 5 km away, this achievement strengthens community capacity, with the clinic now accepting more patients from its immediate surrounds. (KUNAR: SAR0037)



Sarkani Clinic's new entry gate and boundary wall.

Engaging Female Youth in Sport

Social and cultural expectations in Afghanistan offer comparatively few opportunities for females to actively engage in sports. This prompted the Kandahar Department of Sports and Olympics to approach Creative-CCI to support a 96-day basketball training camp, involving 120 female students. Under the guidance of experienced trainers, fitness and basketball instruction was provided at the Zarghona Ana High School gymnasium, in Kandahar City. In addition to embracing physical exercise and social engagement benefits, the activity facilitated an interactive forum arranged by the project shura, where the young women met provincial government representatives to discuss youth related topics. This activity also aligns with program strategic objectives to increase opportunities that build a sense of belonging and self-esteem (KANDAHAR: KAN0052)



Female students attending one of the training sessions at Zarghona Ana High School.

Reliable Water Supply for At Risk Community

The village of Toot Oba is located in a remote, mountainous corner of Kunar's Sarkani District, which has regularly succumbed to Taliban control. Highly dependent upon agricultural subsistence, over recent years many families departed the community due to unreliable and inadequate water supplies to grow crops. In response to ongoing community calls to provide water relief, the program partnered with government through the DAIL, to construct a reservoir. The completed reservoir has a capacity to retain 810 cubic meters of water, servicing Toot Oba Village and hundreds of jeribs (acres) of farming land. The activity has delivered the community a sustainable irrigation and water management solution, and strengthened GIRoA leadership, dependability and legitimacy. (KUNAR: SAR0027)



Toot Oba Water Reservoir is located at the junction of two springs, high in the mountains of Sarkani.

Helmand Girls School Upgrade

Malalai Girls High School educates up to 4,000 young women in Lashkar Gar City. Responding to complaints about safety and substandard facilities at the school, the program funded the School Principal's Office to renovate two school buildings and the playground. Over 4-months the project re-equipped the science laboratory, refurbished classrooms and provided new desks and chairs. Rohia, a student who had stopped attending school due its dilapidated condition, said, "The old classrooms were damp, furniture was broken and school was a difficult place to be, when all I wanted was learn and get an education." The activity demonstrated positive coordination outcomes between the community and local government. It further underscores program objectives that seek to increase educational opportunities, which in turn will build community capacity. (HELMAND: HMD0029)



A safer and better equipped learning environment will benefit thousands of female students.